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280543Z Feb 01

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ACTION DRL-02

INFO	LOG-00	AF-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00
	EUR-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	NSAE-00
	OIC-02	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8301
INFO NSC WASHDC
DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000859

SIPDIS

DRL/IL FOR KBRYANT
NSC FOR JFRAZER
ILAB FOR RSHEPHARD
LONDON FOR CGURNEY
PARIS FOR B WILLIAMS
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER
PASS USAID FOR AFR/SD - DWELLER, AFR/SA - CPALMA,
NNEWMAN, AA/AFR - VDICKSON-HORTON

E.O. 12958: DECL 02/27/11

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: ZCTU UNION LEADER CONFIRMS THAT LABOR CONGRESS
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OUTCOME ASSURES COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ZCTU AND THE MDC

REFTEL: HARARE 846

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D' AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR
REASONS 1.5 (B/D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) ACCORDING TO A HIGH-LEVEL UNION OFFICIAL WHO IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE, THE JUST-ENDED ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNION'S (ZCTU) FIVE-YEAR CONGRESS RESULTED IN THE ELECTION OF A NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BODY THAT SOLIDLY SUPPORTS THE MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC). ZIMBABWE'S RULING PARTY, ZANU-PF, TRIED TO BUY DELEGATES' VOTES RIGHT UP TO VOTING TIME AT THE CONGRESS, BUT NOT A SINGLE PRO-ZANU-PF LABOR LEADER WAS ELECTED TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE. WHILE THE NEW NATIONAL EXECUTIVE PUBLICLY AFFIRMED THAT THE ZCTU IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, AND THAT IT IS NON-PARTISAN IN CHARACTER, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE NEW LEADERSHIP WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH THE MDC IN SUPPORTING THE PARTY'S CANDIDATE IN THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) ON FEBRUARY 26, LABOFF MET WITH NICHOLAS MUDZENGHERERE, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ZIMBABWE CATERING AND HOTEL WORKERS UNION, TO DISCUSS THE OUTCOME OF THE
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JUST-ENDED LABOR CONGRESS. MUDZENGHERERE IS ALSO THE FORMER DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ZCTU, AND A MEMBER OF THE MDC NATIONAL EXECUTIVE.

A PRO-MDC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IS ELECTED

3. (C) MUDZENGHERERE REVEALED THAT THE MDC IS VERY PLEASED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE CONGRESS. ACCORDING TO MUDZENGHERERE, ALL THE MEMBERS ELECTED TO THE NEW ZCTU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ARE PRO-MDC LABOR LEADERS (REFTEL). THE NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL, WILLARD CHIBHEBHE, IS THE FORMER PRESIDENT, AND NOW A TRUSTEE OF THE ZIMBABWE RAILWAY ARTISANS WORKERS UNION, AND HAD THE BACKING OF THE OTHER TWO RAILWAY UNIONS. HE ALSO WAS A CANDIDATE FOR SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE MDC WHEN THE PARTY WAS FIRST FORMED IN 1999, AND LATER WAS THE SECRETARY OF POLICY AND RESEARCH FOR THE MDC. THE NEW ZCTU PRESIDENT, LOVEMORE MATAMBO, IS THE PRESIDENT OF THE

ZIMBABWE POST AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS WORKERS UNION, AND WAS PART OF THE ZCTU GENERAL COUNCIL WHEN THE LABOR BODY VOTED TO ORGANIZE THE MDC IN 1998. THE OTHER NEW MEMBERS OF THE ZCTU EXECUTIVE HAVE SIMILARLY STRONG UNION AND MDC CREDENTIALS. THE FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT, LUCIA MATIBENGU, IS THE HEAD OF THE MDC WOMEN'S LEAGUE.

ZANU-PF'S VOTE BUYING FAILS

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14. (C) MUDZENGERE ALLEGED THAT ZANU-PF WAS TRYING TO BUY THE OUTCOME OF THE CONGRESS RIGHT UP UNTIL THE VOTES WERE CAST. HE STATED THAT ZANU-PF BAGMEN CAME TO THE CONGRESS WITH BAGS OF CASH, AND WERE TRYING TO BRIBE CONGRESS DELEGATES TO ENSURE THAT THEY WOULD VOTE FOR THE PRO-ZANU-PF SLATE OF CANDIDATES. THIS IS ON TOP OF THE RUMORED ZIMBABWE \$1.5 MILLION THAT THE RULING PARTY PAID IN DUES ARREARAGES ON BEHALF OF VARIOUS UNIONS SO THAT THEY COULD ATTEND THE CONGRESS AND VOTE FOR THE PRO-ZANU-PF CANDIDATES. HOWEVER, MUDZENGERE INDICATED THAT BECAUSE THE VOTING WAS BY SECRET BALLOT, ZANU-PF'S STRATEGY BACKFIRED, AS THE DELEGATES TOOK THE MONEY AND THEN CAST THEIR BALLOTS FOR THE PRO-MDC CANDIDATES. EVEN THOUGH THE PRO-MDC FORCES WERE UNABLE TO PRESENT A SINGLE SLATE, NOT ONE PRO-ZANU-PF CANDIDATE WAS ELECTED. ISIDORE ZINDOGA, THE FORMER ACTING SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ZCTU AND HEAD OF THE PRO-ZANU-PF SLATE, RECEIVED ONLY 35 VOTES, WHILE CHIBHEBHE RECEIVED 81 VOTES.

A WARM GREETING FOR TSVANGIRAI AND SIBANDA

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OUTCOME ASSURES COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ZCTU AND THE MDC

15. (C) THE FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ZCTU, AND CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE MDC, MORGAN TSVANGIRAI, AND THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE ZCTU, AND CURRENT VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE MDC, GIBSON SIBANDA, RECEIVED A STANDING OVATION FROM THE DELEGATES WHEN THEY ADDRESSED THE CONGRESS. TSVANGIRAI'S COMMENT THAT THE "ZCTU WAS THE SOUL OF THE

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MDC" WAS MET WITH AN ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE FROM THE DELEGATES. ACCORDING TO MUDZENGERE, THERE WERE NO ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS EVIDENT AMONG THE DELEGATES AT THE CONGRESS. WHILE THE NEW EXECUTIVE PUBLICLY AFFIRMED THAT THE ZCTU IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, MUDZENGERE MADE CLEAR THAT IN PRIVATE THE ENTIRE NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS WORKERS IN GENERAL, STRONGLY SUPPORT THE MDC AND WILL FULLY SUPPORT TSVANGIRAI'S CAMPAIGN FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

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MUDZENGERE'S PENDING COURT CHALLENGE

16. (C) IN ADDITION TO HAVING STRONG LABOR CREDENTIALS, MUDZENGERE IS AN MDC ACTIVIST AS WELL. HE WAS ONE OF THE MDC CANDIDATES DEFEATED IN LAST JUNE'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION AS A RESULT OF ZANU-PF INTIMIDATION OF VOTERS. MUDZENGERE REPORTEDLY LOST BY LESS THAN 60 VOTES OUT OF AROUND 15,000 VOTES CAST IN THE MAKONI EAST DISTRICT. HE RELATED HOW ZANU-PF THUGS AND "WAR VETS" HAD PREVENTED COMMERCIAL FARM WORKERS FROM VOTING DURING THE
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PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. THE EVIDENCE OF THE IMPACT OF THIS INTIMIDATION, ACCORDING TO MUDZENGERE, IS THAT 25,000 VOTED IN THE DISTRICT IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM (WHEN THERE WAS NO INTIMIDATION), VERSUS ONLY 15,000 IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION FOUR MONTHS LATER. MUDZENGERE'S COURT CHALLENGE IS TO BE HEARD IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS.

COMMENT

17. (C) THE ELECTION OF A PRO-MDC NATIONAL EXECUTIVE AT THE ZCTU CONGRESS WAS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE FUTURE VIABILITY OF THE MDC AS A NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTY. HAVING ACHIEVED THIS, MORGAN TSVANGIRAI AND THE MDC LEADERSHIP CAN BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF. WHEN THE NEW ZCTU PRESIDENT, LOVEMORE MATAMBO, TOLD THE GOZ-CONTROLLED "THE HERALD" NEWSPAPER THAT "THE ZCTU IS A NON-PARTISAN BODY THAT IS NOT THE SOUL OF THE MDC", THIS WAS FOR THE CONSUMPTION OF PRESIDENT MUGABE AND COMPANY, AND DID NOT SIGNIFY THE TRUE LEANINGS OF THE NEW LEADERSHIP. WE EXPECT THAT THE NEW ZCTU LEADERSHIP WILL WORK TO SUPPORT TSVANGIRAI'S CANDIDACY IN THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN WAYS THAT ON THE SURFACE ARE NON-PARTISAN (E.G. VOTER REGISTRATION, VOTER EDUCATION, GET OUT THE VOTE EFFORTS), BUT WHICH WILL SERVE TO HELP LEVEL THE POLITICAL PLAYING FIELD. END COMMENT.

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